

CHALLENGE TO HEDONISM

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freshness, a brightly personal approach, and₃
every now
and then, a sudden swoop of positive
intellectual brilliance,
she has a rare faculty for gathering a
conversation together,
bringing it to a point If it failed of being the
best kind
of talk, the reason perhaps was that this
"point" was a
little too obvious It was all *for* something
not, as is
the best talk, for itself The mere play of
mind on mind
is not one of their pleasures nor was talk at
their house,
even when the company was intimate, of
the kind to
evoke those long pauses, in which ideas,
feelings, even
aspirations, reverberate, and set up
sympathetic echoes
They talk, as they walk, for a purpose They
collected
people and talked to them They tried out ideas
on them
Sensitive interlocutors at times had the feeling
that, their
opinions or reactions once extracted, they
were "placed"
and, placed, were done with To discover what
they were
like, in themselves, was no concern or
interest of their
host and hostess They had got them
classified, they
"knew where they were⁵", as mere
individuals, they did
not signify They were put down in a certain
tabular
column, and that was that "People," she once
remarked,
"are really quite simple " Whether or no,
they do not,
as a rule, care to be thought so, or to feel
themselves assigned
to a category
She, it is true, can, at times, talk nonsense,
of a kind,
and delights in gossip mere gossip, stories
about people

With a kind of ironic and slightly
contemptuous interest,
she keeps in touch with the follies of the world
of Society
with a big S, the world she so definitely left
She also
has a very strong feeling about conduct, a
Puritan outlook
on more things than mere eating and drinking,
and gossip
feeds this. Even here, however, an extrinsic
interest can
be sensed, behind her easy narrative flow, the
stones are
being arranged, like the people and the facts,
into materials
for judgment and classification: the thing,
even at its